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MODERN PHILOSOPHIES OF LIFE

Dr. Warner Fite has put into book form four "lectures" forming part of the program of public "lectures given at the University of Chicago in the summer of 1909."¹ Lecture 1 contrasts the mechanical conception of the individual and the social order with the idealistic view. Lecture 2 develops a theory of consciousness and its "degrees" together with a doctrine of social consciousness and the conscious society. Lecture 3 discusses individuality and social unity, and criticizes the notions of altruism, self-sacrifice, and brotherly love. Lecture 4 advocates a modified theory of natural rights, justifies a clever self-regarding intelligence if it later proves to be "socially serviceable" (because it is constructive), approves socialism in so far as it stands for a comprehensive organization of society allowing freedom of choice, and defends the normative value of the conception of an ultimate harmony of interests for all fully conscious individuals. It also summarizes the main contentions: the social good is not a common good, but a mutual and distributive good; the social problem is a technological problem calling, not for a change of heart, but for a change of conditions: individuality is a matter of enlightened self-interest and practical wisdom.

Intelligent self-assertion is taken to be the valid motive of all free conscious agents. In support of his position the author employs a view of consciousness similar to that of Royce. Although, as the preface indicates, the treatment owes much to Professor Dewey, a central interest is to break down the doctrines of the "common good," the growing self, and "sympathetic impulses" defended in the *Ethics* of Dewey and Tufts. The same line of criticism is intended to dispose of sociological writers who are said to drown the individual in the swamp of the "social unity" of the one reality, the "group." The Christian emphasis on love is also imputed to be liable to the charge of mysticism and communism.

Professor Fite's social doctrines revolve about a metaphysical interpretation of consciousness, and the teleological aspect of reflection assumes great importance. There is a corresponding lack of attention to considerations bearing upon origins and history. According to the author, when consciousness appears upon the cosmic scene, it simply and grandly *is*—a unique, splendid transcendence of the sway of mechanical

¹ *Individualism: Four Lectures on the Significance of Consciousness for Social Relations*. By Warner Fite. New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1911. xix+301 pages. \$1.80.

sequence. That it can be stated as a "product" of biological or environmental factors, that it is a function of a group intercourse, that it arises, historically, when impulses conflict and demand readjustment, that the moral self *grows* by positing objects of ethical regard in advance of the customary standards, are propositions appropriate to a thoroughgoing functional psychology which Dr. Fite repudiates. He urges that consciousness is a many *and* one, in contrast to material things which are many *or* one, mutually repellent and exclusive. Consciousness involves purpose and selection, yet conscious selection performs the miracle of satisfying at the same time all other rational purposes: for it the *now* and *then*, the *here* and *there* are realized all at once in the lucid gleam of reflective insight. An intelligent purpose is all-inclusive of the interests of others, and it is inconceivable that rational beings should not agree after discussion and understanding. A final harmony of ends, although imperfectly realized in human affairs, is the goal. It is a regulative concept, known and obeyed in so far as man rises from the physiological, the instinctive, and the affective, all of which, the author thinks, belong more or less to the unconscious, to suffer the limitations of the mechanical world-order, and thus to be unfit for supplying a basis of unification. The real foundation for society is found in the idea, felt as the expression of a unified self. Such self-consciousness is said to arise in the child contemporaneously with the consciousness of objects and other selves; consciousness is a unity demanding a felt subject-object relation. In this respect Professor Fite is in conflict with much evidence from animal and child psychology, which suggests the probability of an intense consciousness of objects and persons without a definition to oneself of their significance and implications.

With a philosophical statement of the intelligent individual established, Professor Fite is prepared to attack the theories which are lacking in recognition of the primacy of self-conscious personalities. He objects to the scientific attitude to the universe because it reduces individuals to billiard balls. Sociologists are not free from the error of thinking of members of society in terms of structure instead of in terms of intelligent centers of insight. Their assumed instincts, sympathies, and "interests" guarantee no inner control. In preference to the recent endeavor to make the biological and racial endowments of mankind serve in the capacity of establishing a preliminary solidarity, Mr. Fite approves the social contract theory, since it recognizes that discussion and choice are more powerful instruments of union than impulse and feeling.

In opposition to the Greeks' delight in the "warm light of clear knowledge," Christianity is mystical, since it presumes that thought does nothing more than introduce distinctions and differences. One thing *is* because something else is *not*; in the world of economic relations, if I am rich, you are poor. Thus mysticism ends in communism. The difficulty of applying the Christian ideal of brotherhood to State activities is that whereas love (though not really of the kind which absorbs all differences) is present in the family, the fraternal relation is a problem rather than a fact in the larger life of society. For Christianity these practical technological questions of intelligent organization of conflicts of interests are irrelevant, since it does not conceive of love as a problem but as a mystical unity superior to the analysis of science.

To the reviewer it is apparent that the defenders of the Christian attitude will need some acuteness and dialectical skill in order to meet the argument of this volume on its own ground. Leaving aside, however, the query whether Professor Fite has correctly described the Christian doctrine of the relation between feeling and idea, it must suffice to indicate several directions in which the discussion is unconvincing.

The primary consideration is that Professor Fite constructs his theory of life out of cloth dyed in two colors. Up to a certain point he follows empirical psychology with its motor emphasis and its functional classification of processes; then he renounces questions of origins in the interests of a metaphysical conception in which thought is of superior validity. While, therefore, he may verbally appreciate the importance of feeling and intuition, in the end he is bound to appraise them as way-stations in the journey toward the idea—that element of our psychological endowment which is given the first place. All individual and social existence, in so far as it has meaning, must approximate to that harmony, that reconciliation of the now and then, the here and there, achieved by reflection. The outcome of some systems of metaphysics is reached; namely, that although intellection is presumed to secure individuation and synthesis all at once, *for us* the barriers remain impenetrable. What we secure is "degrees of consciousness": the self does not arise. This is not a novel statement in the literature of philosophy, but it is rather unusual to see the social implication so emphatically brought out as is done by Professor Fite. It almost seems that the human basis of union in society which empirical scientists detect in powerful but unanalyzed "sympathetic impulses" and work in common is thrown over into an unrealized realm of harmony. Of course there is control and unification secured by discussion and cultural inter-

ests, and it may be agreed that technological adjustment is one thing needful; without forgetting that, there is still room for asserting that there may be social activity in instinct, feeling, and overt action before the meaning of such reciprocity is appreciated. It may be urged, too, that there are objective responsibilities of the more intelligent to the less intelligent first felt as emotional, and that when the stage of reflective calculation of the duty in terms of the self is reached, the self is ready to enter another field of ethical perception. The vital thing is not a metaphysical appraisal of the moments of our conscious processes; in consistent idealistic fashion Professor Fite practically calls feeling unclear ideas. Feelings may be viewed in that way, but they are also stages, equally necessary and complementary to ideas, in the process of reacting to a stimulus to movement. In a real sense the feeling is a form of control; without it the idea would not emerge: the end is neither a system of ideas harmoniously adjusted nor a mystic state of transcendence, but an organization of activities proceeding from the instinctive and, so far as our type of consciousness reveals, passing over into dispositions or habits. These habits are simply movements under leash. The images which come to consciousness derive their meaning within the necessity of action which, as such, is neither idea nor feeling. Both feeling—love—and intellection are moments, and both are functional and "social."

The flavor of dogmatism in the above brief statement of an alternative point of view is not characteristic of Professor Fite's treatment. It is catholic and broad-gauged. Without being unappreciative of the stimulating polemic against sentimentalism in sociology, ethics, politics, and religion, the reader is left with an impression that when the details of a practical problem are discussed, there is at times a lack of intimacy with the human values that cannot be dialectically outlined. The atmosphere of being *in* a situation rather than surveying it, is missing. There is something esoteric in a conception which limits "society" to a neighborhood of "gentlemen," and the reader wonders whether the "newer ideals of peace" can be so confined. Professor Fite may retort that so far as there is a real "society" in a city of immigrants it must be due to self-assertion, ideas, and a correlative organization of social functions. Yet in a community where culture abounds, such as a neighborhood of university specialists, it is doubtful whether any more real agreement prevails than in other groups in which acquisition of culture is less—provided that the consciousness of common problems is equal.

ERNEST L. TALBERT

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Keary's *Pursuit of Reason*¹ protests against a mechanistic conception of the universe and aims to establish an "artistic" interpretation in primacy. The thesis is that some things cannot be stated in quantitative terms and that every quantitative view of the universe therefore lacks finality. A distinction between "reason" and "science" is maintained throughout the work. Reason is made the more inclusive. It is something more than intellect and assumes an ethical attitude since the conscience "has a great deal to do with it also." Reason involves two types of facts. Those which are demonstrable and consequently can be measured belong to the field of science, but reason also deals with undemonstrable facts, termed by the author "artistic." Conduct presents illustrations of the latter; men do not act according to syllogism, or by measure. Hence reason is "an affair of ethics." Opposed to this artistic function of reason is the demand for utility fostered by a distrust of abstract reasoning and the spirit of polemic.

While the author's interest does not involve reason as a whole, but a particular phase of reason, various details of the argument show that this artistic reason is actually an integrating function of imagination. He would not deny the place of reason in science; all science must imply reason. Science is an abstraction from reality and tends toward a rationalism that is essentially scholastic in character. Consequently it is a new obscurantism. Through the argument there are reminiscences of the Kantian distinction of practical and theoretical reason. Not always, however, are the logical distinctions clear and constant. To term uncertain speculation artistic reason, does not clarify the business of thinking. It must lead to a species of egoism unless the results of artistic reason are shown to be uniform under all conditions. Such a claim could not be maintained.

Yet the author has rendered a service by his reiteration that reality is not bestowed on truth by demonstration. For instance, human emotions do not belong to the sphere of demonstration. Since the James-Lange theory of the emotions seems to treat emotions as physical fact it is rejected. Emotions cannot be measured. Indeed, all the phenomena of psychology belong to the same class. He therefore denies the validity of physiological psychology in particular because it endeavors to measure facts of mind. But even in general he denies that psychology can ever have serious value. It deals only with abstractions, not with reality. Reality is a whole, the totality of experience. To examine

¹ *The Pursuit of Reason*. By Charles Francis Keary, M.A. Cambridge: The University Press 1910. viii+456 pages. 9s. net.

details, say of a landscape, is to abstract from the whole. Science in its reliance upon number, a creation of human mind, actually leads us away from reality. It opposes utility to reality and, despite its boons, introduces serious errors into life. Art alone can lead us back to the consideration of wholes. And yet the author refuses to admit the reign of temperament for in temperament he sees decadence in art. The objection to science he limits to its claim to absolute truth. Science is not equivalent to all knowledge.

Some of the evils that arise from the scientific point of view are shown. It tends to a statistical treatment of the problems of life and shows contempt for human beings. It leads to the idea that majorities decide truth. Hence while some sympathy is felt with Newman's doctrine of assent, because of an analogy between his "illative sense" and the authors "artistic reason," the pragmatic position which is held to have a kinship to assentism is rejected. Newman substitutes faith for reason, but the substitution made by pragmatism is more obscure. Both are protests against the finality of demonstrable reason. The best that pragmatism can say is that "whatever is, is right or at least inevitable." Actually both in their substitution of something else for reason are regarded as hostile to artistic reason in the same way as is positivism.

The second part of the book aims at the application of the author's theory to both church and state. Much that it touches upon is of interest only in England. At times a pessimistic attitude mingles with a serene, almost dogmatic confidence in the identification of artistic reason with the author's opinion, but such a result is the easy issue of the thesis. There is urged an argument for the existence of God, or gods, on the basis of telepathy. Since some people believe they have had communication with the supernatural, therefore it exists!

WILLIAM THEODORE PAULLIN

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RECENT STUDIES OF SPIRITISM

In an interesting study of spiritism by Dr. Amy E. Tanner¹ considerable attention is given to the psychological forces acting upon the "sitter," the qualifications of the investigator of spiritistic phenomena, and the life-history and personal characteristics of the "medium."

¹ *Studies in Spiritism*. By Amy E. Tanner. New York: D. Appleton, 1910. xxiii+408 pages. \$2.50.